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### WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE.

Dr. Grout has recently printed the following remarks on No. 196 of his North American Musci Pleurocarpi, which Cardot and Theriot have described in the May number of the Botanical Gazette as *Plagiothecium Groutii*.

"No. 196. This is a most interesting form about which "Doctors disagree" very widely. Mrs. Britton has called it a variety of *Plagiothecium denticulatum*, but I do not believe many others will agree with her view. M. Cardot has named it as above. Dr. Best is sure it is a depauperate form of *Raphidostegium recurvans*. "The perichaetial bracts, the pedical, the cilia, one or two, imperfect and shorter than the typical teeth, the imperfect annulus, the conical short-beaked operculum, about one-half the length of the urn and the quadrate-rectangular exothelial cells, are all about as we might expect in a starved form of *R. recurvans*; "only this and nothing more." Whatever else it may be it is not a *Plagiothecium*!" "I believe it is a new species which is more at home in *Raphidostegium* because of the enlarged alar cells in some of the larger plants. The smaller size, the shorter less slenderly acuminate leaves with alar cells much less strongly developed, complanate but not recurved and only very slightly unsymmetric, and the smaller capsules with shorter beak, seem to me so distinctive as to make this form worthy of specific rank. It hardly seems depauperate as it was growing with typical *R. recurvans* in a favorable spot (possibly a little dry at times) and besides it is fruiting freely. There is a little *R. recurvans* intertangled with it."

Now in this case there is every reason for disagreement because the specimens distributed as No. 196 were collected at Hempstead, Long Island, on December 1, 1899, and the specimens sent to me were collected at Lawrence, Long Island, May 25, 1899. I have recently examined No. 196, and am convinced that I have never seen these specimens before!

Furthermore they are mixed with *Rhynchostegium serrulatum* not *Raphidostegium recurvans*, and the cells of the basal angles are not inflated and only slightly differentiated, two or three being rectangular instead of long *prosenchymatous* like the rest of the leaf as figured by Theriot. There is no marked resemblance to any species of *Raphidostegium*, and it is incredible that Dr. Best should have mistaken it for a "depauperate form of *R. recurvans*," especially as Dr. Grout admits that this species was "intertangled" with it! I have just compared these two species and No. 196 has the flattened unequaled leaves of *Plagiothecium*, and the apex though serrate is much shorter and broader and not strongly recurved as in *R. recurvans*!

The description in the Botanical Gazette for May, p. 379, states that *P. Groutii* was collected in "Delaware: Hempstead"—this is also evidently a mistake according to Dr. Grout's label! The moral of this is that it is not worth while to print useless remarks about species that are mixed, nor to attribute wrong determinations of specimens which have never been sent!

ELIZABETH G. BRITTON,  
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